

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 PM-03 L-02 SP-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 AID-10 DRC-01

/064 W

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R 081200Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3069

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL UDORN

SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC

MACTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 7461

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MCAP, TH, LA, CB

SUBJECT: AIR AMERICA

REF: STATE 91607

1. SUMMARY. RTG MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAS CONFIRMED SELECTION OF THAI/AM TO UNDERTAKE FY 75 AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AT UDORN. SIMULTANEOUSLY RTG REQUESTS TRANSFER OF ALL GOVERNMENT-OWNED FACILITIES TO RTG. IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR, MARSHAL THAWI CONFIRMED IMPORTANCE RTG ATTACHES TO TURNOVER OF EQUIPMENT; AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED COMPLEXITY OF PROBLEM BUT PROMISED TO BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE WITHIN LEGAL LIMITS. IN SEPARATE LATER CONVERSATION KRIANGSAK APPEARED DISSUADED FROM PRESSING FOR GFE NOW. MISSION WILL PURSUE CONTRACT DEAL WITH THAI/AM WHILE AWAITING FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS ON GFE DISPOSITION. END SUMMARY

2. EMBASSY RECEIVED MAY 6 FOLLOWING "VERY URGENT"

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LETTER FROM AIR CHIEF MARSHAL THAWI, MINISTER OF DEFENSE

(INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION FROM THAI ORIGINAL).

BEGIN TEXT:

I REFER TO YOUR EXCELLENCY'S LETTER REQUESTING THE COOPERATION FROM THE THAI GOVERNMENT TO ARRANGE FOR A THAI COMPANY TO ENGAGE IN AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AT UDORN AIRBASE, REPLACING THE AIR AMERICA COMPANY WHOSE CONTRACT WILL EXPIRE ON JUNE 30 THIS YEAR.

I AM VERY PLEASED TO UNDERTAKE THE REQUEST BY SECURING THE SERVICES OF THE THAI/AM COMPANY FOR 1974 CONTRACT (JULY 1, 1974 TO JUNE 30, 1975). IN ORDER TO HAVE SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT FOR THE THAI/AM COMPANY TO ACHIEVE THE MAXIMUM DEGREE OF MAINTENANCE SERVICES AS DESIRED BY THE US GOVERNMENT, IT IS REQUESTED THAT THE US GOVERNMENT TRANSFER ALL OF ITS GOVERNMENT-OWNED FACILITIES, PRESENTLY PROVIDED FOR THE AIR AMERICA COMPANY, TO THE THAI GOVERNMENT FOR THE ON-GOING SUPERVISION AND OPERATIONS.

THE THAI GOVERNMENT APPRECIATES THE US GOVERNMENT'S ANXIOUSNESS REGARDING THE EMPLOYMENT PROBLEM OF 1,600 THAI EMPLOYEES OF THE AIR AMERICA COMPANY. I ACCEPT THE MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION AND ATTEMPT TO FIND THE BEST POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE. I THINK THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO EMPLOY THESE PERSONNEL AT THE SAME LOCATION.

FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS IF YOUR EXCELLENCY WOULD URGENTLY MAKE CONSIDERATION OF THE PRINCIPLES WHICH I HAVE CONFIRMED, AS RELATED ABOVE, IT WOULD PROVIDE ADEQUATE TIME TO ARRANGE THE MATTER TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULT. END TEXT.

3. IN CALL ON THAWI MAY 7, AMBASSADOR ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF THE LETTER AND EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT THAI/AM PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT. WITH REFERENCE TO USG-OWNED PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, THE AMBASSADOR
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SAID THIS INVOLVED SOME PROBLEMS. WE WERE PREPARED TO START REVIEWING THE INVENTORY AND IDENTIFYING CATEGORIES WHICH COULD BE RELEASED TO THE RTG. THE AMBASSADOR ASSURED THAWI THAT HE INTENDED TO SEE THAT ALL EQUIPMENT ESSENTIAL TO OPERATE THE MAINTENANCE FACILITY WOULD BE RETAINED INTACT FOR CURRENT USE AND THAT FINAL DISPOSITION WOULD BE CONSIDERED SYMPATHETICALLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE RTG'S INTEREST.

4. THAWI STRESSED THAT THE RTG STRONGLY DESIRED TO HAVE ALL EQUIPMENT AT THE UDORN MAINTENANCE FACILITY TURNED OVER TO THE RTG SUPREME COMMAND OR RTAF, WHICH WOULD THEN ARRANGE FOR LOAN TO THAI/AM AS LONG AS THE USG CONTINUED TO REQUIRE CONTRACT MAINTENANCE SUPPORT. HE ASSERTED THAT THE THAI PRESS WOULD QUERY THE RTG REGARDING DISPOSAL OF THE FACILITY WHEN AIR AMERICA CLOSES DOWN. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT ALL FIXED INSTALLATIONS MUST BE TURNED OVER TO THE RTG IN ACCORDANCE WITH PRIOR AGREEMENTS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS.

5. THE AMBASSADOR ASSURED THAWI THAT HE WOULD PURSUE THIS PROBLEM DURING HIS FORTHCOMING CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON, BUT URGED THAT THE UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS OF TITLE TO THE PROPERTY NOT DELAY PROMPT AGREEMENT ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR THAI/AM ASSUMPTION OF CONTRACT RESPONSIBILITIES EFFECTIVE JULY 1. HE ALSO EXPRESSED GRATIFICATION WITH THAWI'S ASSURANCES THAT THE PROBLEMS OF THE UDORN LABOR FORCE WERE BEING CONSIDERED AND SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT THE SIZE OF THE USG FY 75 CONTRACTS WOULD BE LARGE ENOUGH TO HOLD THE PRESENT WORK FORCE TOGETHER.

6. IN LATER CONVERSATION MAY 7 WITH GENERAL KRIANGSAK, DEPCOMUSMACTHAI COLONEL ADERHOLT POINTED OUT PROBLEMS FOR THAI/AM IN RECEIVING SPARE PARTS SUPPORT FOR GFE IF AND WHEN TITLE TRANSFERRED TO RTG. KRIANGSAK EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST AND ASSURED ADERHOLT HE WOULD BRIEF THAWI AND PERSUADE HIM TO WITHDRAW DEMAND FOR EARLY TURNOVER OF UDORN EQUIPMENT.

7. ON BASIS OF REQUIREMENTS RECEIVED FROM USDAO VIENTIANE DEPCHIEF AND OTHER USERS, MACTHAI/USAF CONTRACTING OFFICERS WILL PROCEED ASAP WITH THAI/AM TO NEGOTIATE CONTRACT
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FOR CONTINUED OPERATION OF UDORN FACILITY FOR FY 75.
FURTHER DISCUSSIONS OF DISPOSAL OF GFE WILL BE DEFERRED
PENDING RECEIPT WASHINGTON GUIDANCE PROMISED REFTEL.
KINTNER

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